

Meeting Summary
September 21, 2011 - DRAFT

Members Present: Sanita Alrey-DeBose, Robert Caggiano, Joseph Capuano, Jonathan Fink, Sean Gabaree, Chelsea Johnson, Larysa Kurylas, Sara Lappano, Tom Martin, James Mensah, Patrick Naehu, Manuel Ochoa, Susan Petersen, Dianne Whitaker

Members Absent: Melissa Brown, Louis Choporis, Regina Dull, Zoe Lefkowitz, Chris Lindsay, Erin Roberts

Guests: Ash Kosiewicz, on behalf of Latino Economic Development Corporation (LEDC); M. Jardeneh on behalf of Glenmont Forest Neighbors Civic Association; Jon Lourie of Lourie Architects; Ed Murtagh on behalf of Green Wheaton; and Herbert Quinones on behalf of General Insurance Agency

Call to Order: The meeting convened at 7:05 p.m.

- Jonathan Fink, Acting Chair, welcomed the committee back after the August recess and welcomed newly appointed members to WRAC. All committee members present introduced themselves and explained why they are interested in serving on WRAC.
- Greg Ossont, the New Deputy Director of the County's Department of General Services introduced himself. Prior to assuming his new position Mr. Ossont worked at the City of Gaithersburg for 15 yrs. He has an extensive background in issues similar to those in Wheaton. Mr. Klein added that Mr. Ossont will assume a broader role in the County government's overall development plans.
- Mr. Fink advised WRAC members of subcommittee assignments for the 2011-12 WRAC year. Subcommittee chairs provided brief descriptions of their respective subcommittee's function and objectives for the benefit of new WRAC members. Mr. Fink summarized by explaining that the full WRAC committee would address issues from a 'global' perspective while more 'granular' issues would be addressed at the subcommittee level.

Approval of July Meeting Summary – A motion to approve the meeting summaries, subject to a spelling correction, was made by Ms. Petersen and seconded by Ms. Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of Design Competition – Ms Kurylas provided background on previous WRAC discussions concerning the possibility of a design competition for the proposed Wheaton Library and Recreation Center and introduced Jon Lourie. Mr. Lourie was invited to share his perspectives with WRAC on the design competition for the Silver Spring Civic Center, which opened in 2010. Mr. Lourie is an architect, based in Silver Spring. He has been involved issues related to the redevelopment of Downtown Silver Spring since 1995, initially as a member of Woodside Park Civic Association and subsequently as a member of the Silver Spring Civic Center Steering Committee. Mr. Lourie's reflections on the design competition included the following:

- The Civic Center is recognized by the Silver Spring community as a truly wonderful building.
- There was a significant degree of community interaction in its design. This was atypical of County capital projects.
- There were numerous steering committees during the redevelopment of Silver Spring.
- Silver Spring's redevelopment plans called for the demolition of the Silver Spring Armory, and its replacement with a Town Center. The Armory had been a location for many public gatherings.
- At the request of the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board, then County Executive Doug Duncan formed the Silver Spring Town Center Steering Committee (SSTCSC). The committee was comprised of community stakeholders - residents, businesses and the County.
- The SSTCSC's initial task was to help determine the program of requirements for a new civic Center, i.e. building and room size, uses, special requirements. This was a fairly long process.
- SSTCSC requested a design competition for the building, which was embraced by County Executive Duncan.
- The SSTCSC created a framework, and established a non-profit organization (NPO) manage programming of the Civic Center once it was completed. Just recently, the NPO entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the County for operating the Civic Center.
- Design Competition specifics:
 - Architect and Washington Post columnist Roger Lewis facilitated the competition
 - The Competition was a 2-stage process:
 1. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was advertised locally and nationally. A screening committee was established to review and qualify responses, relative to design abilities and competence, vis-à-vis scale and building types designed. Over 30 firms responded, and 5 were selected to participate in the 2nd stage of the competition.
 2. The second stage consisted of a pre-design conference lasting 1-2 days. This enabled the 5 finalist firms to interact with the community to discuss needs, concerns, and technical issues. The companies analyzed community input and set forth on their design efforts. Designs had to adhere to established criteria - specific perspectives and drawings, and a model. There was a budget for the design competition: Each firm was given \$25,000 for their design submissions. This was part of the County's overall budget established for the Civic Center. The screening committee participated in the review process as well as County staff. A public, juried event was held to select the winner. The jury was composed of County staff, community representatives and several well-known local architects.

- The architectural firm of Machato & Silvetti, from Boston MA was selected because of their design, which promoted connectivity to the streets and an urban plaza.
- The County had some difficulty working with Machado because the County had specific requirements for the construction of their building. Eventually, Machado was paired with a local architectural firm familiar with County requirements. If this had been done sooner the process would have worked better.
- The process took 5 months from issuing the RFQ to selecting an architect.
- When completed, the Civic Center building received a Design Excellence award from Maryland chapter of the American Institute of Architects as well as an award from the National Association of Counties (NACo).
- Typical County process for projects is the selection of an architectural firm from a predetermined, rotating list of architects, typically obtained through the County's procurement process. Design competitions are "out of the County's comfort zone".
- Mr. Ossont commented that processes "out of the County's comfort zone" often take longer, which translates into additional expense. This creates concerns around accountability, especially cost overruns. In preparation for the next County CIP cycle DGS is trying hard to maintain the monies proposed for the Library/Rec project in the proposed FY13-18 CIP, because dollars are so thin. DGS is currently working the project 4 years out, and trying to keep it from going 8 yrs out. A design completion is a good idea but the County is nowhere close to building this project.
- To make a design competition happen the County will need to be heavily lobbied.
- The competition happened in Silver Spring because the County Executive wanted to provide a process that allowed the community to have a stake.
- The design competition for the Silver Spring Civic Center was unique. Mr. Lourie did not know of any other County project that employed a design competition. It was suggested for Silver Spring Library but that library's concept for library is more complex, given Purple Line is proposed to run through it.
- For a design competition to be feasible, it needs to be integrated into the project design schedule.

Redevelopment Report: Mr. Klein reported the following:

- Sector Plan Work Session – The Council's Planning Housing and Economic Development Committee is currently analyzing the Sector Plan. The Sept. 26 session focused on addressing Transportation issues and an update on B.F. Saul Project Guidelines.

- Design Guidelines – The Planning Board will discuss the Draft Design Guidelines at its October 6 meeting. WRAC is addressing the Guidelines via the Project Review Subcommittee. Mr. Klein suggested that WRAC send a letter to the Board.

Motion: Mr. Martin made a motion that the Project Review Subcommittee draft a letter to the Planning Board commenting on the proposed Wheaton Design Guidelines. Ms. Kurylas seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously by all members present.

- Regarding the Wheaton Redevelopment Program CIP, the County Executive continues to identify Wheaton's redevelopment as a priority CIP item.
- Ennalls Avenue- Price Avenue Connection – Linking these two streets is proposed in the Draft Wheaton Sector Plan. Loiderman Soltesz & Associates, an engineering firm, has completed a feasibility analysis.
- Westfield – held a meeting with its neighboring communities regarding the Costco project. About 50 persons attended and posed hard questions concerning the proposed fueling station, greening, pedestrian access, noise, and visual impact. The construction of Costco will take approximately 1 year. The advent of Costco has created additional retailer interest – Dicks Sporting Goods, Panera Bread Co., H&M, Elevation Burger, and Ana Mendez University. The school, based in Puerto Rico has satellite campuses in Florida and now Wheaton. It delivers its curriculum in a unique manner, as a portion of each class taught is done alternately in English and Spanish.
- 11141 Georgia Ave. – The commercial office building situated between MetroPointe and Archstone apartments, and sometimes referred to as Computer Building, has been sold to an institutional investor.
- B.F. Saul – Movement toward a General Development Agreement continues, but the project includes a potential new opportunity – 3 rather than 2 office buildings. The third office building situated at the intersection of Veirs Mill Rd. and Georgia Ave. might possibly be occupied by Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. The point is a gateway to Wheaton, and needs signature building. Mr. Ossont added that this potential project lends itself to design competition, should this opportunity work out. Park & Planning needs to revisit its Program of Requirement from several years ago, when it planned a new facility for itself. A question was raised as to how the proposed M-NCPPC headquarters affects B.F. Saul's proforma statement. Mr. Klein advised that it did not, as B.F. Saul did not include "the point" (Viers Mill & Georgia) in its proforma, and M-NCPPC is interested in being a property owner rather than being a B.F. Saul tenant.

Nomination & Election of Chair and Vice Chair – At the previous WRAC meeting, Mr. Fink had been nominated as Chair and Ms. Petersen and Mr. Martin had been nominated for Vice-Chair. No additional nominations were put forth by WRAC members. Upon balloting, Mr. Fink was elected as Chair and Ms. Petersen was elected Vice-Chair.

Green Wheaton Update – Mr. Murtagh advised of the following:

- The group just became a non-profit organization in the Spring.
- Its mission is to promote a greener, more sustainable (economically and environmentally) Wheaton.
- Green Wheaton is interested in visible green project in the area that serve as examples.
- The group is interested in educating Wheaton's resident and businesses in area, and recently participated in The Limerick Pub/Royal Mile Pub Harp & Thistle Festival.
- Green Wheaton will partner with the Friends of Sligo Creek in its efforts to clean the stream.
- Green Wheaton will be participating in Community Service Day on 10/27.
- At future WRAC meetings Ms. Alrey-DeBose, who is also a member of both WRAC and Green Wheaton will represent the group.

Requests to Speak: The Chair recognized Ash Kosiewicz. Mr. Kosiewicz introduced himself as the Communications & Advocacy Director of Latino Economic Development (LEDC). He advised that LEDC has been active in identifying and understanding their constituencies' hopes and concerns regarding Wheaton's redevelopment. LEDC and other community partners want to begin a conversation with the County and B.F. Saul to address concerns about the effects of redevelopment- particularly during the construction phase. Additional issues identified included job opportunities, impacts on housing affordability, and the potential loss of services provided by organizations and agencies housed in the Mid-County Regional Center. Mr. Fink suggested LEDC's continued input would be valuable to WRAC, particularly to the Economic Development Subcommittee.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.